Washington, DC – Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement in response to President Obama's issuance of a Major Disaster Declaration for New York counties affected by the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee.

"The declaration of a Major Disaster is an essential step toward ensuring that New Yorkers get the help they need to rebuild in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Lee. Last week I called FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate and asked him to expedite this process, and it's clear that has occurred. I want to thank President Obama and FEMA for all they have done to ensure that families, small businesses and farmers receive recovery assistance. I am also hopeful that this designation will soon be expanded, so that county and local governments can receive federal assistance in rebuilding damaged public infrastructure.

"The Southern Tier of New York was devastated by the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee. Just as in other natural disasters, the federal government has an obligation to help those who have been hurt. As a member of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, I'm going to continue fighting to ensure that the resources are there to fulfill that obligation."